



WESTERN VIEWS

March-April, 1997

Official Publication of the West Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association

WMGCSA 1997 Meeting Schedule

May 13	St. Ives
June 9	Yankee Springs
July 8	Hawk Hollow
Aug. 18	Kaufman G.C.
Sept. 15	Golf Day Blythefield
Oct. 8	Annual Meeting The Moors
Nov. 1	Fall Party The Pohlcat

MEMBER NOTICE...

All meeting expenses will be on a CASH ONLY BASIS. There will be NO CHARGES ALLOWED. This will give us more control of all transactions and will eliminate having the host club having to handle all the billings.

Meeting Cancellation Policy - This is a reminder of a current policy. If you make reservations for a meeting and are unable to attend, and you do not cancel, you will be billed and expected to make a payment.

President's Message

By the time this message reaches you, we will all be so busy we won't have much time to think. Being forewarned is like being forearmed and that is half the battle isn't it?

For those of you that participated in the roundtable survey, thank you! The survey is just another tool to have at your disposal. A special thanks to the education committee for their hard work and effort. We had good attendance, but we are always striving for more. Our next two monthly meetings at Grand Haven and a joint meeting with the mid Michigan association at St. Ives will be fun. Take the time to attend and bring along another member.

As I write this letter it is the second day of spring, we opened the front 9. I am looking forward to a great golfing season. Your board of directors wants to remind all members that Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM). If there are any programs or issues that need attention, please feel free to contact any board member. The board of directors is here to serve the membership, we need to hear from you!

I wish everyone a great year, sharpen up that golf game and have some fun!

Paul Schippers
President

A Letter of Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors and members of the Western Michigan G.C.S.A. for all of your help and support during my campaign for Director of G.C.S.A.A. While I was not successful in winning a seat on the board, the support I received was better than expected and WE WILL do it next year. This strong showing would not have been possible without your support and backing and I greatly

appreciate it and will try harder next year.

I have been appointed to the Education Committee of G.C.S.A.A. so I will try and keep up to date with what is going on at G.C.S.A.A. throughout the year. If there is anything that I can do for the Western, please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you very much for support.

Jon D. Maddern, C.G.C.S.

Editor's Note: Please write me if you have any corrections or if you are interested in doing an article for us at:

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Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Welcome New Members

Bob Stipcak, Superintendent
Timber Ridge Golf Course

Heather Nabozny, Head Grounds Keeper
West Michigan White Caps

Turf Internship

Hi, my name is Brian VanderPloeg. I am currently attending M.S.U. and completing my internship for the Turfgrass Management Program at Cascade Hills Country Club in Grand Rapids. The Superintendent is Al Bathum and his Assistants are Tony Geib and Jason Larabee. Other Superintendents that I have worked for in the area are Jack Thomasma and Tom Drougal at L.E. Kaufman Golf Course. I also received some good experience working at P.G.A. National in West Palm Beach, Florida in the winter of 1996. While there I was able to set cups for the P.G.A. Senior Championship. When not working, I like to play golf. I have been fortunate and played in

some local amateur tournaments in the area. This past year I finished second in the Kent County Amateur. I am looking forward to Dr. Rogers visit this summer.

With the one year of school and the practical experience that I received under Jack and Tom at Kaufman I am looking forward to this summer. Areas that I would like a better understanding of are pesticide and fertilizer applications and calibration, and the irrigation and pumphouse and how they work. One other very important area that I would like to learn more about are people management skills. The crew at Cascade works very hard and they are fun to be around. This spring

they have had a good attitude under some pretty cool conditions. While at Kaufman I gained a great appreciation for hard work from Jack Thomasma.

Since I've started, I have been involved in course cleanup, course prep, irrigation repair and installation and prep for the new bunkers that are being renovated. I walked the last four holes with the Architect, Golf Pro, Greens Chairman, Construction Superintendent and Al Bathum while they flagged the bunkers.

In conclusion, I have enjoyed the first three weeks. I have learned quite a bit and am looking forward to the warm weather.

Brian VanderPloeg
Turfgrass Intern

Good People Are Hard To Find

"Good people are hard to find" is a statement being heard in all business operations today. It can be increasingly tough to find and hire your seasonal and summer crew, with grocery clerks and fast food attendants earning upwards of \$7.00 an hour. However, on golf courses we have a lot to offer that other industries don't, such as sunshine, cool breezes, being around a diversity of people and job tasks.

At Cascade Hills we have had our best luck for finding employees by placing ads in our local papers. We try to hire a diversity of individuals for our crew. We have had tremendous success with retirees. We find them to be exceptionally punctual, and their attendance is usually quite good.

As a whole, the retirees are more careful when it comes to completing job tasks in full detail, and they are usually equipment-friendly.

We also have a strong nucleus of returning seasonal workers who are all quite proficient in a lot of areas of the operation. They are one of our best assets as a course.

Then we have our student summer workers. On a whole, we have had good success with our student workers. We

try to find upbeat individuals with good attitudes, who enjoy being outside and working hard.

Once you have hired a crew, then comes the hard part — keeping them motivated and productive through the long hot summer. This I feel is one of my most important roles at Cascade Hills. I try to always be energetic and in a good mood and reinforce this with the crew. We have found with a lot of employees that it's not just a matter of money. To a lot of them, feeling important and appreciated is more important. I try to go out of my way to let people know this. I feel it's important to get to know everybody on a more personal level. The crew seems to respond very positive when you talk to them about things they are interested in. It only takes a couple of minutes a day to do this and they feel better. In turn, they are more likely to be productive if they believe you care about them, and they feel they are important and not just somebody who works for you. We strive to make it more like they work with us, than for us. Teamwork, I believe, is critical in all areas of life.

We also do many other things for our crew to help with morale. We have

an annual canoe trip, afternoon cookouts, pizza parties, all paid for by our club. Starting last year, we also had a couple of Sunday afternoon softball games against Egypt Valley's crew. This is a very good idea to let our crew get to know some other people from the area in their profession. (And I'm sure our crew will be victorious over Egypt Valley in 1997!) These are some of the things we do to try to improve morale and employee turnover.

In conclusion, let me say that at Cascade Hills, we find a wide variety of people and personalities aids in a happy and productive crew. This, in return, makes our job that much more enjoyable and rewarding. As much as Al, Jason and I would like to think we run the course, none of what we do would be possible without our hard working crew. This is a brief overview of our hiring strategies as well as some of our management practices. If you have any comments or questions, feel free to call Al Bathum, Jason or me at any time.

Thank you,

Tony Geib
Assistant Superintendent
Cascade Hills Country Club

Great Time in Grand Haven

The Spring Meeting had a good turnout with 65 people playing golf and 12 for lunch only. Wally fixed a great steak lunch and his staff, along with Charley Tazalaar, the Superintendent, did a nice job of getting the golf facilities together for our group. It also was a pleasure to see Bruce Matthews - happy and healthy.

Dr. Trey Rogers spoke for 15 minutes covering current issues in golf and how things are going at M.S.U. We appreciate the updates. After that we hit the links and a good time was had by all.

Persian Saying

He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool.

Avoid him.

He who knows not and knows that he knows not will learn.

Teach him.

He who knows and knows not that he knows, will fail.

Pity him.

He who knows and knows that he knows is a wise man.

Follow him.

Excerpt from chapter "Some thoughts on Golf",
Allister MacKenzie's The Spirit of St. Andrews

Congratulations are in order!!

Scott Slattery, who is the Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Railside, married Peggy Hurley on March 29th, 1997. We would like to congratulate them both and wish them a long happy life together. Remember, Peggy, to be easy on Scott when he's working those long hours this summer. I hear that boss he has is a tough one to work for.

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Irrigation Technician Needed:

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maintenance of a live irrigation system. Must be self-motivated, flexible and willing to work as part of a large team. Benefits available. Apply in person at the Resort's Human Resources Office, Monday through Friday, 8-5pm, Grand Traverse Resort, P.O. Box 404, Acme, MI 49610-0404. EOE.

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